

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Status of Claims:

Claims 1-5 and 7-12 are currently being canceled.

Claim 6 is currently being amended.

No claims are currently being added.

This amendment cancels and amends claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claims remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 6 and 13 are now pending in this application.

Indication of Allowable Subject Matter:

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter made in the Office Action with respect to claims 6 and 13. By way of this amendment and reply, claim 6 has been amended to include the features of its base claim and any intervening claims. Thus, claims 6 and 13 are now in allowable form based on the indications made in the Office Action.

Claim Rejections – Prior Art:

In the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 4 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,844,699 to Usami et al.; claims 3, 5, 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Usami et al. in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0081023 to Uchida; claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Usami et al. in view of Uchida, U.S. Patent No. 6,897,988 to Saito et al., and U.S. Patent No. 5,426,517 to Schwartz et al.; claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Usami et al. in view of Uchida and U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0031256 to Hiramatsu et al.; claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Usami et al. in view of Uchida and U.S. Patent No. 4,941,038 to Walowit; and claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being

unpatentable over Usami et al. in view of Uchida and U.S. Patent No. 6,014,457 to Kubo et al.

Due to the cancellation of claims 1-5 and 7-12, these rejections are now moot.

Conclusion:

Since all of the issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed in this Amendment and Reply, Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorize payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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